proposals to CEA and other relevant authorities for their approvals.

Supply of Gas Through Pipelines in Delhi by GAIL

* 196. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) has launched any pilot project in Delhi to supply gas to consumers pipelines;

(b) if so, the total number of consumers proposed to be benefited by the supply;

(c) whether the GAIL has also initiated any action to introduce such facility in Tamil Nadu; and

(d) if so, the names of the towns selected for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Around 1200 consumers are proposed to be covered.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Relaxation in Service Period to Central Secretariat Service Officers

*197. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of officers belonging to Central Secretariat Service at present holding the post of Joint Secretary in various Ministries and Departments of the Government of India;

(b) whether it is a fact that most of these officers do not qualify to become Additional Secretary due to the fact that they have not renderred 25 years of Group 'A' service; and

(c) if so, the reasons for which the Central Secretariat Service, the only Group 'B' service participating in the Central Staffing Scheme, has not been given any relaxation in respect of the number of years of service to be rendered in Group 'A', vis-a-vis other Group 'A' service participating in the Central Staffing Scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI. S.R. BALASUB-RAMONIYAN): (a) Thirty-one Officers belonging to the Central Secretariat Service arc presently holding the posts of Joint Secretary/equivalent in various Ministries/Departments of the Government of India, as also in autonomous bodies

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Docs not airsc, in view of (b) above.

Issue of Bonds by REC

*198. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Rural Electrification Corporation has been allowed by the Reserve Bank of India to issue special bonds for its pumpset energisation programme in rural areas and semi-urban areas;

(b) if so, by when these bonds are likely to be issued;

(c) the total amount to be raised through these bonds; and

(d) whether the funds so raised would be used strictly for energy efficient pumps suitable for lower than the normal vol tage, often available in rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) Yes, Sir. Reserve Bank of India has permitted the subscription to bonds, issued by Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) exclusively for financing pumpset energisation programmes in rural and semi-urban areas, to be treated as priority sector

advances of the banks under indirect finance to agriculture.

(b) The Corporation proposes to issue these bonds in the month of March, 1997.

(c) The total amount likely to be raised through these bonds for the year 1996-97 is Rs. 150 crores.

(d) The amount raised by REC through subscription to its priority sector bonds will be used in providing financial assistance to various SEBs/State Power Departments for making available the infrastructure necessary for energisation of pumpsets. The procurement of pump-sets is the responsibility of the consum ers either from their own resources or, by taking loans from banks. NABARD has, however, advised Commercial Banks to sanction/provide loans for purchase of only BIS (Bureau of Indian Standard) pumpsets.

Self Employment schemes in Maharashtra

*199. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the amount of loan provided under self-employment schemes to the urban poor in Maharashtra, during 1996-97;

(b) what measures Government pro pose to take to provide such assistance to more persons and make the procedure getting loans easy; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to make the self-employment schemes more effective and beneficial to the unemployed youths?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS & EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PAR-LIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): (a) Two Central-ly sponsored urban self-employment schemes are being implemented in the country including Maharashtra. They are the Scheme of Urban Micro Entrerprises (SUME) of Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY) launched in October, 1989, and the self employment component of Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication programme (PMI UPEP) launched in November, 1995. The amount of loan provided under the self-cmploymcnt com-ponents of NRY and PMI UPEP is as below:—

N.R.Y.: Under this scheme, during 1996-97 (as on 31.1.1997) a sum of Rs. 379.47 lakhs of Government subsidy has been sanctioned to the beneficiaries in Maharashtra. Approximately three times of this amount has been sanctioned as loan by banks.

PxMI UPEP : The Government of Maharashtra has reported that loan amounting to Rs. 42.17 lakhs and subsidy amounting to Rs. 6.37 lakhs have been provided under the self-employment com-ponent of PMI UPEP in the State during 1995—97.

(b) and (c) The progress of schemes is reviewed from time to time in consultation with the State Government and the Reserve Bank of India. The Urban Local Bodies arc urged to recommend more and more applications to the Banks. Suitable instructions as may be necessary are issued from time to time.

Disparity between poverty and affluence

* 200. SHRIMATI VEENA, VERMA:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the paradoxical situation obtaining in the country with packets of affluence and conspicuous consumption amidst vast tracts of poverty and ignorance; and

(b) if, so what specific programmes have been drawn up for being dovetailed into the Ninth Five Year Plan or other wise to reduce this striking disparity bet-